

T H E
T R A G E D Y
O F
J A N E S H O R E,

Written by NICHOLAS ROWE, Esq;

— *Conjux ubi pristinus illi
Respondet curis.*

VIRG.

E D I N B U R G H:

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T O

His Grace the Duke of QUEENSBERRY
and DOVER, Marquis of BEVERLY,
Esq.

MY LORD,

I Have long lain under the greatest obligations to your Grace's family, and nothing has been more in my wishes, than that I might be able to discharge some part, at least, of so large a debt. But your noble birth and fortune, the power, number, and goodness of those friends you have already, have placed you in such an independency on the rest of the world, that the services I am able to render to your Grace can never be advantageous, I am sure not necessary, to you in any part of your life. However, the next piece of gratitude, and the only one I am capable of, is the acknowledgment of what I owe: and as this is the most public, and indeed the only way I have of doing it, your Grace will pardon me, if I take this opportunity to let the world know the duty and honour I had for your illustrious father. It is, I must confess, a very tender point to touch upon; and at the first sight may seem to be an ill-chosen compliment, to renew the memory of such a loss, especially to a disposition so sweet and gentle, and to a heart so sensible of filial piety as your Grace's has been, even from your earliest childhood. But perhaps this is one of those griefs by which the heart may be made better; and if the remembrance of his death bring heaviness along with it, the honour that is paid to his memory by all good men, shall wipe away those tears,

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tears, and the example of his life set before your eyes, shall be of the greatest advantage to your Grace in the conduct and future disposition of your own.

In a character so amiable as that of the Duke of QUEENSBERRY was, there can be no part so proper to begin with, as that which was in him, and is in all good men, the foundation of all other virtues, either religious or civil: I mean good nature; which is friendship between man and man, good breeding in courts, charity in religion, and the true spring of all beneficence in general. This was a quality he possessed in as great a measure as any gentleman I ever had the honour to know. It was this natural sweetness of temper, which made him the best man in the world to live with, in any kind of relation. It was this made him a good master to his servants, a good friend to his friends, and the tenderest father to his children. For the last, I can have no better voucher than your Grace; and for the rest, I may appeal to all that have had the honour to know him. There was a spirit and pleasure in his conversation, which always enlivened the company he was in; which, together with a certain easiness and frankness in his disposition, that did not at all derogate from the dignity of his birth and character, rendered him infinitely agreeable. And as no man had a more delicate taste of natural wit, his conversation always abounded in good humour.

For those parts of his character which related to the public, as he was a nobleman of the first rank, and a minister of state, they will be best known by the great employments he pass through; all which he discharged worthily as to himself, justly to the princes who

D E D I C A T I O N. v.

who employed him, and advantageously for his country. There is no occasion to enumerate his several employments, as Secretary of State for *Scotland* in particular, for *Britain* in general, or Lord High Commissioner of *Scotland*; which last office he bore more than once; but at no time more honourably, and (as I hope) more happily, both for the present age, and for posterity, than when he laid the foundation for the *British* union. The constancy and address which he manifested on that occasion, are still fresh in every body's memory; and perhaps when our children shall reap those benefits from that work, which some people do not foresee and hope for now, they may remember the Duke of QUEENSBERRY, with that gratitude, which such a piece of service done to his country deserves.

HE shewed upon all occasions a strict and immediate attachment to the Crown, in the legal service of which, no man could exert himself more dutifully nor more strenuously: and at the same time, no man gave more bold and more generous evidences of the love he bore to his country. Of the latter, there can be no better proof than the share he had in the late happy revolution; nor of the former, than that dutiful respect, and unshaken fidelity, which he preserved for her present Majesty, even to his last moments.

WITH so many good and great qualities, it is not at all strange that he possessed so large a share, as he was known to have, in the esteem of the Queen, and her immediate predecessor; nor that those great Princes should repose the highest confidence in him: and at the same time, what a pattern has he left behind him for the Nobility in general, and for your Grace in particular, to copy after!

YOUR

vi DEDICATION.

YOUR Grace will forgive me, if my zeal for your welfare and honour, (which no body has more at heart than myself) shall press you with some more than ordinary warmth to the imitation of your noble father's virtues. You have, my Lord, many great advantages, which may encourage you to go on in pursuit of this reputation; it has pleased God to give you naturally that sweetness of temper, which, as I have before hinted, is the foundation of all good inclinations. You have the honour to be born, not only of the greatest, but of the best parents; of a Gentleman generally beloved, and generally lamented; and of a Lady adorned with all virtues that enter into the character of a good wife, an admirable friend, and a most indulgent mother. The natural advantages of your mind have been cultivated by the most proper arts and manners of education. You have the care of many noble friends, and especially of an excellent uncle, to watch over you in the tenderness of your youth. You set out amongst the first of mankind, and I doubt not but your virtues will be equal to the dignity of your rank.

THAT I may live to see your Grace eminent for the love of your country, for your service and duty to your Prince, and, in convenient time, adorned with all the honours that have ever been conferred upon your noble family: that you may be distinguished to posterity, as the bravest, greatest, and best man of the age you live in, is the hearty wish and prayer of,

MY LORD,

*Your Grace's most obedient, and
most faithful, humble Servant*

N. ROWE.



PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. WILKS.

*T*O-night, if you have brought your good old Taste,
We'll treat you with a downright English Feast.
A Tale, which told long since in homely wise,
Hath never fail'd of melting gentle Eyes;
Let no nice Sir despise our hapless Dame,
Because recording Ballads chant her Name;
Those venerable ancient Song-enditers
Soar'd many a Pitch above our modern Writers:
They caterwaul'd in no romantic Ditty,
Sighing for Phillis's or Cloc's Pity.
Justly they drew the Fair, and spoke her plain,
And sung her by her Christian Name——'twas Jane.
Our Numbers may be more refin'd than those,
But what we've gain'd in Verse, we've lost in Prose.
Their Words, no shuffling, double Meaning knew,
Their Speech was homely, but their Hearts were true.
In such an Age immortal Shakespear wrote,
By no quaint Rules, nor hampering Critics taught;
With rough majestic Force he mov'd the Heart,
And Strength and Nature made amends for Art.
Our humble Author does his Steps pursue,
He owns he had the mighty Bard in view;
And in these Scenes has made it more his Care
To rouse the Passions than to charm the Ear.
Yet for those gentle Beaux who love the Chime,
The Ends of Acts still jingle into Rhime.
The Ladies too, he hopes will not complain,
Here are some Subjects for a softer Strain,
A Nymph forsaken, and a perjur'd Swain.
What most he fears, is, lest the Dames should frown,
The Dames of Wit and Pleasure about Town,
To see our Picture drawn, unlike their own.

But

*But lest that Error should provoke to Fury
 The hospitable Hundreds of Old Drury,
 He bid me say, in our Jane Shore's Defence,
 She dold about the charitable Pence,
 Built Hospitals, turn'd Saint, and died long since.
 For her Example, whatsoe'er we make it,
 They have their Choice to let alone, or take it.
 Tho' few, as I conceive, will think it meet,
 To weep so sorely for a Sin so sweet:
 Or mourn and mortify the pleasant Sense,
 To rise in Tragedy two Ages hence.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Duke of Gloster.
 Lord Hastings.
 Catesby.
 Sir Richard Ratcliffe.
 Bellmour.
 Dumont.

*Mr. Cibber.
 Mr. Booth.
 Mr. Husbards.
 Mr. Bowman.
 Mr. Mills.
 Mr. Wilks.*

W O M E N.

Alicia.
 Jane Shore,

*Mrs. Porter.
 Mrs. Oldfield.*

Several Lords of the council, guards and attendants.



J A N E

JANE SHORE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Tower.*

Enter the Duke of GLOSTER, Sir RICHARD RATCLIFFE, and CATESBY.

Gloſt. **T**HUS far ſucceſs attends upon our counſels,
And each event has answer'd to my wiſh;
The Queen and all her upſtart race are quell'd;
Dorſet is baniſh'd, and her brother *Rivers*
E'er this lies ſhorter by the head at *Pomfret*.
The nobles have with joint concurrence nam'd me
Protector of the realm: my brothers children,
Young *Edward* and the little *York* are lodg'd
Here, ſafe within the tower. How ſay, you, ſirs,
Does not this buſineſs wear a lucky face?
The ſcepter and the golden wreath of royalty
Seem hung within my reach.

Ratcl. Then take 'em to you.
And wear 'em long and worthily; you are
The laſt remaining male of princely *York*:
(For *Edward's* boys, the ſtate eſteems not of 'em,)
And therefore on your ſovereignty and rule,
The common weal does her dependance make,
And leans upon your Highneſs' able hand.

Cat. And yet to-morrow does the council meet
To fix a day for *Edward's* coronation.
Who can expound this riddle?

Gloſt. That can I.

Thoſe lords are each one my approv'd good friends,
Of ſpecial truſt and nearneſs to my boſom ;
And howſoever buſy they may ſeem,
And diligent to buſtle in the ſtate,
Their zeal goes on no further than we lead,
And at our bidding ſtays.

Cat. Yet there is one,
And he among the foremoſt in his power,
Of whom I wiſh your Highneſs were aſſur'd :
For me, perhaps it is my nature's fault,
I own I doubt of his inclining much.

Gloſt. I gueſs the man at whom your words wou'd point:
Haftings——

Cat. The ſame.

Gloſt. He bears me great good will.

Cat. 'Tis true, to you, as to the lord protector,
And *Gloſter's* Duke, he bows with lowly ſervice :
But were he bid to cry, God ſave King *Richard*,
'Then tell me in what terms he would reply.
Believe me, I have prov'd the man, and found him ;
I know he bears a moſt religious reverence
'To his dead maſter *Edward's* royal memory,
And whither that may lead him, is moſt plain.
Yet more—One of the ſtubborn fort he is,
Who, if they once grow fond of an opinion,
They call it honour, honeſty, and faith,
And ſooner part with life than let it go.

Gloſt. And yet this tough impracticable heart
Is govern'd by a dainty finger'd girl ;
Such flaws are found in the moſt worthy natures ;
A laughing, toying, wheedling whimpering ſhe,
Shall make him amble on a goſſip's meſſage,
And take the diſtaff with a hand as patient
As e'er did *Hercules*.

Ratcl. The fair *Alicia*,
Of noble birth and exquisite of feature,
Has held him long a ſlave to her beauty.

Cat.



Cat. I fear he fails in his allegiance there ;
Or my intelligence is false, or else
The dame has been too lavish of her feast,
And fed him till he loaths.

Gloſt. No more, he comes.

Enter Lord HASTINGS.

L. Haſt. Health and happineſs of many days
Attend upon your Grace.

Gloſt. My good Lord Chamberlain !
We're much beholden to your gentle frienſhip.

L. Haſt. My Lord, I come an humble ſuitor to you.

Gloſt. In right good time. Speak out your pleaſure
freely.

L. Haſt. I am to move your Highneſs in behalf
Of *Shore's* unhappy wife.

Gloſt. Say you, of *Shore* ?

L. Haſt. Once a bright ſtar that held her place on high,
The firſt and faireſt of our *Engliſh* dames,
While royal *Edward* held the ſov'reign rule,
Now ſunk in grief, and pining with deſpair ;
Her waining form no longer ſhall incite
Envy in women, or deſire in man.
She never ſees the ſun, but thro' her tears,
And wakes to ſigh the live-long night away.

Gloſt. Marry ! the times are badly chang'd with her
From *Edward's* days to theſe. Then all was jollity,
Feaſting and mirth, light wantonneſs and laughter,
Piping and playing, minſtrely and maſquing ;
'Till life fled from us like an idle dream,
A ſhew of mommery without a meaning.
My brother, reſt and pardon to his ſoul,
Is gone to his account, for this his minion.
The revel rout is done—But you were ſpeaking
Concerning her—I have been told that you
Are frequent in your viſitation to her.

L. Haſt. No farther, my good Lord, than friendly pity
And tender hearted charity allow.

Gloſt.

Gloſt. Go to : I did not mean to chide you for it.
For, ſooth to ſay, I hold it noble in you
To cheriſh the diſtreſs'd——On with your tale.

L. Haſt. Thus it is, gracious Sir, that certain officers
Uſing the warrant of your mighty name,
With inſolence unjuſt, and lawleſs power,
Have ſeiz'd upon the lands, which late ſhe held
By grant from her great maſter *Edward's* bounty.

Gloſt. Somewhat of this, but ſlightly have I heard,
And tho' ſome counſellors of forward zeal,
Some of moſt ceremonious ſanctity,
And bearded wiſdom, often have provok'd
The hand of juſtice to fall heavy on her ;
Yet ſtill in kind compaſſion of her weakneſs,
And tender memory of *Edward's* love,
I have with held the mercileſs ſtern law
From doing outrage on her helpleſs beauty.

L. Haſt. Good heav'n, who renders mercy back for
mercy,
With open handed bounty ſhall repay you :
This gentle deed ſhall fairly be ſet foremoſt,
To ſcreen the wild escapes of lawleſs paſſion,
And the long train of frailties fleſh is heir to.

Gloſt. Thus far, the voice of pity pleaded only ;
Our farther and more full extent of grace
Is given to your requeſt. Let her attend,
And to ourſelf deliver up her griefs.
She ſhall be heard with patience, and each wrong
At full redreſt. But I have other news
Which much import us both, for ſtill my fortunes
Go hand in hand with yours : our common foes,
The Queen's relations, our new-fangled gentry,
Have fall'n their haughty creſts—that for your privacy,
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Jane Shore's house.

Enter BELLMOUR and DUMONT.

Bell. How she has liv'd you've heard my tale already.
The rest your own attendance in her family,
Where I have found the means this day to place you,
And nearer observation best will tell you.
See with what sad and sober cheer she comes !

Enter JANE SHORE.

Sure, or I read her visage much amiss,
Or grief besets her hard. Save you, fair Lady,
The blessings of her chearful morn be on you,
And greet your beauty with its opening sweets.
J. Sh. My gentle neighbour! your good wishes still
Pursue my hapless fortunes : ah ! good *Bellmour* !
How few, like thee, enquire the wretched our,
And court the offices of soft humanity ?
Like thee reserve their raiment for the naked.
Reach out their bread, to feed the crying orphan,
Or mix their pitying tears with those that weep ?
Thy praise deserves a better tongue than mine
To speak and bless thy name. Is this the gentleman,
Whose friendly service you commended to me ?

Bell. Madam ! it is.

J. Sh. A venerable aspect ! *[Aside.]*
Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silver locks ;
He wears the marks of many years well-spent,
Of virtue, truth well try'd. and wise experience ;
A friend like this, would suit my sorrow well.
Fortune, I fear me, Sir, has meant you ill. *[to Dumont.]*
Who pays your merit with that scanty pittance,
Which my poor hand and humble roof can give.
But to supply these golden vantages,

Which

Which elsewhere you might find, expect to meet
A just regard and value for your worth,
The welcome of a friend, and the free partnership
Of all that little good the world allows me.

Dum. You over rate me much; and all my answer
Must be my future truth; let that speak for me,
And make up my deserving,

J. Sb. Are you of *England*?

Dum. No, gracious Lady, *Flanders* claims my birth,
At *Antwerp* has my constant bidding been.
Where sometimes I have known more plenteous days,
Than those which now my failing age affords.

J. Sb. Alas! at *Antwerp*!—On forgive my tears!

[Weeping.

They fall for my offences——and must fall
Long, long, ere they shall wash my stains away.
You know perhaps——oh grief! oh shame!—my husband.

Dum. I knew him well—but stay this flood of anguish,
The senseless grave feels not your pious sorrows:
Three years and more are past, since I was bid,
With many of our common friends, to wait him
To his last peaceful mansion. I attended.
Sprinkled his clay-cold corse with holy drops,
According to our church's rev'rend rite,
And saw him laid in hallow'd ground to rest.

J. Sb. Oh! that my soul had known no joy but him!
That I had liv'd within his guiltless arms,
And dying slept in innocence beside him!
But now his honest dust abhors the fellowship,
And scorns to mix with mine.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. The Lady *Alicia*,
Attends your leisure.

J. Sb. Say I wish to see her, [Exit servant.
Please, gentle Sir, one moment to retire,
I'll wait you on the instant; and inform you

Of

Of each unhappy circumstance in which
Your friendly aid and counsel much may lead me.
[*Exeunt Bellinour and Dumont.*]

Enter ALICIA.

Alic. Still my fair friend, still shall I find you thus?
Still shall these sighs heave after one another,
These trickling drops chase one another still,
As if the posting messenger of grief,
Could overtake the hours fled far away,
And make old time come back?

J. Sh. No, my *Alicia*,
Heav'n and his saints be witness to my thoughts,
There is no hour of all my life o'erpast,
That I could wish should take its turn again.

Alic. And yet some of those days my friend has known,
Some of those years might pass for golden ones,
At least, if womankind can judge of happiness.
What could we wish, we who delight in empire,
Whose beauty is our sov'reign good, and gives us
Our reasons to rebell, and pow'r to reign,
What could we more than to behold a monarch,
Lovely, renown'd, a conqueror, and young,
Bound in our chains, and sighing at our feet?

J. Sh. 'Tis true the royal *Edward* was a wonder,
The goodly pride of all our *English* youth;
He was the very joy of all that saw him,
Form'd to delight, to love, and to persuade.
Impassive spirits, and angelic natures
Might have been charm'd, like yeilding human weak-
ness,

Stoop'd from their heav'n, and listen'd to his talking;
But what had I to do with kings and courts?
My humble lot had cast me far beneath him;
And that he was the first of all mankind,
The bravest and most lovely, was my curse.

Alic. Sure, something more than fortune join'd your
loves;
Nor could his greatness, and his gracious form,

Be

Be elsewhere match'd so well, as to the sweetness
And beauty of my friend.

J. Sh. Name him no more :

He was the bane and ruin of my peace.
This anguish and these tears, these are the legacies
His fatal love has left me. Thou wilt see me,
Believe me, my *Alicia*, thou wilt see,
E'er yet a few short days pass o'er my head,
Abandon'd to the very utmost wretchedness.
The hand of pow'r has seiz'd almost the whole
Of what was left for needy life's support ;
Shortly thou wilt behold me poor, and kneeling
Before thy charitable door for bread.

Alic. Joy of my life, my dearest *Shore*, forbear
To wound my heart with thy foreboding sorrows,
Raise thy sad soul to better hopes than these,
Lift up thy eyes, and let 'em shine once more,
Bright as the morning sun above the mists.
Exert thy charms, seek out the stern protector,
And sooth his savage temper with thy beauty :
Spite of his deadly unrelenting nature,
He shall be mov'd to pity and redress thee.

J. Sh. My form, alas ! has long forgot to please ;
The scene of beauty and delight is chang'd,
No roses bloom upon my fading cheek,
Nor laughing graces wanton in my eyes ;
But haggard grief, lean looking fallow care,
And pining discontent, a rueful train,
Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn.
One only shadow of a hope is left me ;
The noble minded *Hastings*, of his goodness,
Has kindly underta'en to be my advocate,
And move my humble suit to angry *Gloster*.

Alic. Does *Hastings* undertake to plead your cause ?
But wherefore should he not ? *Hastings* has eyes ;
The gentle Lord has a right tender heart,
Melting and easy, yielding to impression,
And catching the soft flame from each new beauty ;
But yours shall charm him long.

J. Sh.

J. Sb. Away, you flatterer !
 Nor charge his gen'rous meaning with a weakness,
 Which his great soul and virtue must disdain.
 Too much of love thy hapless friend has prov'd,
 Too many giddy foolish hours are gone,
 And in fantastic measures danc'd away :
 May the remaining few know only friendship.
 So thou, my dearest, truest, best *Alicia*,
 Vouchsafe to lodge me in thy gentle heart,
 A partner there ; I will give up mankind,
 Forget the transports of encreasing passion,
 And all the pangs we feel for its decay.

Alic. Live ! live and reign for ever in my bosom.
 [Embracing.]

Safe and unrivall'd there possess thy own ;
 And you, ye brightest of the stars above,
 Ye saints that once were women here below,
 Be witness of the truth, the holy friendship,
 Which here to this my other self I vow,
 If I not hold her nearer to my soul,
 Than ev'ry other joy the world can give,
 Let poverty, deformity and shame,
 Distraction and despair seize me on earth,
 Let not my faithless ghost have peace hereafter,
 Nor taste the bliss of your celestial fellowship.

J. Sb. Yes, thou art true, and only thou art true ;
 Therefore these jewels, once the lavish bounty
 Of royal *Edward's* love, I trust to thee ;

[Giving a casket.]

Receive this all, that I can call my own.
 And let it rest unknown, and safe with thee :
 That if the state's injustice should oppress me,
 Strip me of all, and turn me out a wanderer,
 My wretchedness may find relief from thee,
 And shelter from the storm.

Alic. My all is thine ;
 One common hazard shall attend us both,
 And both be fortunate, or both be wretched.

C

But

But let thy fearful doubting heart be still,
 The saints and angels have thee in their charge,
 And all things shall be well. Think not, the good,
 The gentle deeds of mercy thou hast done,
 Shall die forgotten all; the poor, the pris'ner,
 The fatherless, the friendless, and the widow,
 Who daily own the bounty of thy hand,
 Shall cry to heav'n, and pull a blessing on thee;
 Ev'n man, the merciless insulter man,
 Man, who rejoices in our sex's weakness,
 Shall pity thee, and with unwonted goodness,
 Forget thy failings, and record thy praise.

J. Sb. Why should I think that man will do for me
 What yet he never did for wretches like me?
 Mark by what partial justice we are judg'd;
 Such is the fate unhappy women find,
 And such the curse intail'd upon our kind,
 That man, the lawless libertine, may rove,
 Free and unquestion'd thro' the wilds of love;
 While woman, sense and nature's easy fool,
 If poor weak woman swerve from virtue's rule;
 If strongly charm'd, she leave the thorny way,
 And in the softer paths of pleasure stray;
 Ruin ensues, reproach and endless shame,
 And one false step intirely damns her fame.
 In vain with tears the loss she may deplore,
 In vain look back to what she was before,
 She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE *continues.**Enter ALICIA.**[Speaking to Jane Shore as entering.]*

Alic. NO farther, gentle friend ; good angels guard
you,

And spread their gracious wings about your slumbers.

The drowsy night grows on the world, and now

The busy craftsman and o'erlabour'd hind,

Forget the travail of the day in sleep :

Care only wakes, and moping pensiveness ;

With meagre discontented looks they sit,

And watch the wasting of the midnight taper.

Such vigils must I keep, so wakes my soul,

Restless and self-tormented ; Oh false *Hastings* !

'T'hou hast destroy'd my peace. *[Knocking without.]*

What noise is that ?

What visitor is this, who with bold freedom

Breaks in upon the peaceful night and rest,

With such a rude reproach ?

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. One from the court,

Lord Hastings (as I think) demands my Lady.

Alic. *Hastings* ! be still my heart, and try to meet
him

With his own arts : with falsehood—But he comes.

*Enter Lord HASTINGS.**[Speaks to a servant as entering.]*

L. Hast. Dismiss my train, and wait alone without.

Alicia here ! unfortunate encounter !

But, be it as it may.

Alic.

Alic. When humbly, thus,
 The great descend to visit the afflicted,
 When thus unmindful of their rest they come
 To sooth the sorrows of the midnight mourner :
 Comfort comes with them, like the golden sun,
 Disperses the fullen shades with her sweet influence,
 And cheers the melancholy house of care.

L. Hast. 'Tis true, I would not over-rate a courtesy,
 Nor let the coldness of delay hang on it,
 To nip and blast its favour, like a frost ;
 But rather chose, at this late hour, to come,
 That your fair friend may know I have prevail'd ;
 The Lord Protector has receiv'd her suit,
 And means to shew her grace.

Alic. My friend ! my Lord.

L. Hast. Yes, Lady, yours ; none has a right more
 ample
 To ask my pow'r than you.

Alic. I want the words,
 To pay you back a compliment so courtly ;
 But my heart guesses at the friendly meaning,
 And wo'not die your debtor.

L. Hast. 'Tis well, Madam.
 But I would see your friend.

Alic. Oh thou false Lord !
 I wou'd be mistress of my heaving heart,
 Stifle this rising rage, and learn from thee
 To dress my face in easy dull indifference :
 But 'two'not be, my wrongs will tear their way,
 And rush at once upon thee.

L. Hast. Are you wise !
 Have you the use of reason ? do you wake ?
 What means this raving ! this transporting passion ?

Alic. O thou cool traitor ! thou insulting tyrant,
 Dost thou behold my poor distracted heart,
 Thus rent with agonizing love and rage,
 And ask me what it means ? art thou not false ?
 And I not scorn'd, forsaken and abandon'd,
 Left, like a common wretch, to shame and infamy,

Giv'n

Giv'n up to be the sport of villains tongues,
Of laughing parasites, and lewd buffoons ;
And all because my soul has doated on thee
With love, with truth, and tenderness unutterable ?

L. Haft. Are these the proofs of tenderness and love ?
These endless quarrels, discontents, and jealousies,
These never-ceasing wailings and complainings,
These furious starts, these whirlwinds of the soul,
Which every other moment rise to madness ?

Alic. What proof, alas ! have I not giv'n of love ?
What have I not abandon'd to thy arms ?
Have I not set at nought my noble birth,
A spotless fame, and an unblemish'd race,
The peace of innocence, and pride of virtue ?
My prodigality has giv'n thee all ;
And now I've nothing left me to bestow,
You hate the wretched bankrupt you have made.

L. Haft. Why am I thus pursu'd from place to place,
Kept in the view, and cross'd at every turn ?
In vain I fly, and like a hunted deer,
Scud o'er the lawns, and hasten to the covert ;
E'er I can reach my safety, you o'ertake me
With the swift malice of some keen reproach,
And drive the winged shaft deep in my heart.

Alic. Hither you fly, and here you seek repose ;
Spite of the poor deceit, your arts are known,
Your pious, charitable, midnight visits.

L. Haft. If you are wise, and prize your peace of
mind,
Yet take the friendly counsel of my love ;
Believe me true, nor listen to your jealousy,
Let not that devil, which undoes your sex,
That cursed curiosity seduce you,
To hunt for needless secrets, which neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet, but once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to——be yet advised——

Alic.

Alic. Dost thou in scorn
 Preach patience to my rage? and bid me tamely
 Sit like a poor contented idiot down,
 Nor dare to think thou'lt wrong'd me—ruin seize thee,
 And swift perdition overtake thy treachery!
 Have I the least remaining cause to doubt?
 Hast thou endeavour'd once to hide thy falshood?
 To hide it, might have spoke some little tenderness,
 And shewn thee half unwilling to undo me:
 But thou disdain'st the weakness of humanity,
 Thy words, and all thy actions, have confess'd it;
 Ev'n now thy eyes avow it, now they speak,
 And insolently own the glorious villainy.

L. Hafl. Well then, I own my heart has broke your
 chains.

Patient I bore the painful bondage long,
 At length my gen'rous love disdains your tyranny;
 The bitterness and stings of taunting jealousy,
 Vexatious days, and jarring joyless nights,
 Have driv'n him forth to seek some safer shelter,
 Where he may rest his weary wings in peace.

Alic. You triumph! do! and with gigantic pride,
 Defy impending vengeance. Heav'n shall wink;
 No more his arm shall roll the dreadful thunder,
 Nor send his lightnings forth: no more his justice
 Shall visit the presuming sons of men;
 But perjury, like thine, shall dwell in safety.

L. Hafl. Whate'er my fate decrees for me hereafter,
 Be present to me now, my better angel!
 Preserve me from the storm which threatens now,
 And if I have beyond atonement sinn'd,
 Let any other kind of plague o'ertake me,
 So I escape the fury of that tongue.

Alic. Thy pray'r is heard—I go—but know, proud
 Lord,
 Howe'er thou scorn'st the weakness of my sex,
 This feeble hand may find the means to reach thee,
 Howe'er sublime in pow'ring, and greatness plac'd,
 With royal favour guarded round, and grac'd;

On

On eagle's wings my rage shall urge her flight,
 And hurl thee headlong from thy topmost height ;
 'Then like thy fate, superior will I fit,
 And view thee fall'n, and grov'ling at my feet ;
 See thy last breath with indignation go,
 And tread thee sinking to the shades below. [*Exit Alic.*

L. *Hast.* How fierce a fiend is passion ? with what
 wildness,

What tyranny untam'd, it reigns in woman !
 Unhappy sex ! whose easy yielding temper
 Gives way to ev'ry appetite alike ;
 Each gust of inclination, uncontroll'd,
 Sweeps thro' their souls, and sets them in an uproar ;
 Each motion of the heart rises to fury,
 And love in their weak bosoms is a rage.
 As terrible as hate, and as destructive.
 So the wind roars o'er the wide fenceless ocean,
 And heaves the billows of the boiling deep,
 Alike from north, from south, from east, from west,
 With equal force the tempest blows by turns
 From ev'ry corner of the seaman's compass.
 But soft ye now—for here comes one disclaims
 Strife, and her wrangling train : of equal elements,
 Without one jarring atom was she form'd ;
 And gentleness, and joy, make up her being.

Enter JANE SHORE.

Forgive me, fair-one, if officious friendship
 Intrudes on your repose, and comes thus late,
 To greet you with the tidings of success.
 The princely *Glosser* has vouchsaf'd you hearing,
 To-morrow he expects you at the court ;
 There plead your cause with never failing beauty,
 Speak all your griefs, and find a full redress.

J. *Sh.* Thus humbly let your lowly servant bend ;
 [*Kneeling.*

Thus let me bow my grateful knee to earth,
 And bless your noble nature for this goodness.

L. *Hast.*

L. Haft. Rise gentle dame, you wrong my meaning
much,

Think me not guilty of a thought so vain,
To sell my courtesy for thanks like these.

J. Sb. 'Tis true, your bounty is beyond my speaking;
But tho' my mouth be dumb, my heart shall thank you;
And when it melts before the throne of mercy,
Mourning, and bleeding, for my past offences,
My fervent soul shall breathe one prayer for you,
If prayers of such a wretch are heard on high,
That heav'n will pay you back, when most you need,
The grace and goodness you have shewn to me.

L. Haft. If there be aught of merit in my service,
Impute it there where most 'tis due, to love;
Be kind, my gentle mistress, to my wishes,
And satisfy my panting heart with beauty.

J. Sb. Alas! my Lord——

L. Haft. Why bend thy eyes to earth?
Wherefore these looks of heaviness and sorrow?
Why breathes that sigh, my Love? and wherefore falls
This trickling show'r of tears, to stain thy sweetness?

J. Sb. If pity dwells within your noble breast,
(As sure it does) oh speak not to me thus.

L. Haft. Can I behold thee, and not speak of love?
Ev'n now, thus sadly as thou stand'st before me,
Thus desolate, dejected, and forlorn,
Thy softness steals upon my yielding senses,
'Till my soul faints, and sickens with desire;
How canst thou give this motion to my heart,
And bid my tongue be still?

J. Sb. Cast round your eyes
Upon the high-born beauties of the court;
Behold, like opening roses, where they bloom,
Sweet to the sense, unfully'd all and spotless;
There chuse some worthy partner of your heart
To fill your arms, and bless your virtuous bed;
Nor turn your eyes this way, where sin and misery,
Like loathsome weeds, have over-run the soil,
And the destroyer shame has laid all waste.

L. Haft.

L. Haß. What means this peevish, this fantastic change?

Where is thy wonted pleasantness of face?
Thy wonted graces, and thy dimpled smiles?
Where hast thou lost thy wit, and sportive mirth?
That chearful heart, which us'd to dance for ever,
And cast a day of gladness all around thee?

J. Sb. Yes, I will own I merit the reproach;
And for those foolish days of wanton pride,
My soul is justly humbled to the dust:
All tongues, like yours, are licenc'd to upbraid me,
Still to repeat my guilt, to urge my infamy,
And treat me like that abject thing I have been.
Yet let the saints be witness to this truth,
That now, tho' late, I look with horror back,
That I detest my wretched self, and curse
My past polluted life. All judging heav'n,
Who knows my crimes, has seen my sorrow for them.

L. Haß. No more of this dull stuff. 'Tis time enough
To whine and mortify thyself with penance,
When the decaying sense is pall'd with pleasure,
And weary nature tires in her last stage:
Then weep and tell thy beads, when alt'ring rheums
Have stain'd the lustre of thy starry eyes,
And failing palsies shake thy wither'd hand.
The present moments claim more gen'rous use;
Thy beauty, night and solitude, reproach me.
For having talk'd thus long—Come let me press thee,

[*Laying hold on her.*]

Pant to thy bosom, sink into thy arms,
And lose myself in the luxurious fold.

J. Sb. Never! by those chaste lights above, I swear,
My soul shall never know pollution more;
Forbear, my Lord!—Here let me rather die, [*Kneeling.*]
Let quick destruction overtake me here.
And end my sorrows and my shame for ever.

L. Haß. Away with this perverseness,—'tis too much;
Nay, if you strive—'tis monstrous affectation. [*Striving.*]

D

J. Sb.

J. Sb. Retire ! I beg you leave me——

L. Haft. Thus to coy it!——

With one who knows you too.

J. Sb. For mercy's sake——

L. Haft. Ungrateful woman ! is it thus you pay
My services?——

J. Sb. Abandon me to ruin——

Rather than urge me——

L. Haft. This way to your chamber, [Pulling her.
There if you struggle——

J. Sb. Help ! Oh gracious heav'n !

Help ! save me ! help ! [Crying out.

Enter DUMONT, he interposes.

Dum. My Lord ! for honour's sake——

L. Haft. Hah ! what art thou ? begone !

Dum. My duty calls me

To my attendance on my mistress here.

J. Sb. For pity let me go——

L. Haft. Avaunt ! base groom——

At distance wait, and know thy office better.

Dum. Forego your hold, my Lord ! 'tis most un-
manly

This violence——

L. Haft. Avoid the room this moment,
Or I will tread thy soul out.

Dum. No, my Lord——

The common ties of manhood call me now,

And bid me thus stand up in the defence

Of an oppress'd, unhappy, helpless woman.

L. Haft. And dost thou know me, slave ?

Dum. Yes, thou proud Lord !

I know thee well, know thee with each advantage,
Which wealth, or power, or noble birth can give thee.
I know thee too for one who stains those honours,
And blots a long illustrious line of ancestry,
By poorly daring thus to wrong a woman.

L. Haft. 'Tis wondrous well ! I see, my faint-like
dame,

You

You stand provided of your braves and ruffians,
To mann your cause, and bluster in your brothel.

Dum. Take back the foul reproach, unmanner'd
railer ;

Nor urge my rage too far, lest thou shouldst find
I have as daring spirits in my blood
As thou, or any of thy race e'er boasted ;
And tho' no gaudy titles grac'd my birth,
Titles, the servile courtier's lean reward,
Sometimes the pay of virtue, but more oft
The hire which greatness gives to slaves and sycophants,
Yet heav'n that made me honest, made me more
Than ever king did, when he made a lord.

L. Haft. Insolent villain ! henceforth let this teach
thee *[Draws and strikes him.]*
The distance 'twixt a peasant and a prince.

Dum. Nay then, my Lord, *[Drawing.]* learn you
by this how well

An arm resolv'd can guard it's master's life. *[They fight.]*

J. Sh. Oh my distracting fears ! hold, for sweet
heav'n.

[They fight, Dumont disarms Lord Hastings.]

L. Haft. Confusion ! baffled by a base born-hind !

Dum. Now, haughty Sir, where is our difference
now ?

Your life is in my hand, and did not honour,
The gentleness of blood and inborn virtue
(Howe'er unworthy I may seem to you)
Plead in my bosom, I should take the forfeit.
But wear your sword again ; and know, a lord
Oppos'd against a man is but a man.

L. Haft. Curse on my failing hand ! your better for-
tune
Has giv'n you vantage o'er me ; but perhaps
Your triumph may be bought with dear repentance.

[Exit.]
J. Sh. Alas ! what have you done ! know you the
power,
The mightiness that waits upon this Lord ?

Dum.

Dum. Fear not, my worthiest mistress ; 'tis a cause,
In which heaven's guard shall wait you. O pursue,
Pursue the sacred counsels of your soul,
Which urge you on to virtue ; let not danger,
Nor the incumb'ring world make faint your purpose.
Assisting angels shall conduct your steps,
Bring you to bliss, and crown your end with peace.

J. Sb. Oh that my head were laid, my sad eyes clos'd,
And my cold corse wound in my shroud to rest ;
My painful heart will never cease to beat,
Will never know a moment's peace till then.

Dum. Would you be happy ? leave this fatal place,
Fly from the court's pernicious neighbourhood ;
Where innocence is sham'd, and blushing modesty
Is made the scorner's jest ; where hate, deceit,
And deadly ruin, wear the masques of beauty,
And draw deluded fools with shews of pleasure.

J. Sb. Where should I fly, thus helpless and forlorn,
Of friends, and all the means of life bereft ?

Dum. Bellmour, whose friendly care still weaks to
serve you,

Has found you out a little peaceful refuge,
Far from the court and the tumultuous city.
Within an ancient forest's ample verge,
There stands a lonely, but a healthful dwelling,
Built for convenience, and the use of life :
Around it fallows, meads, and pastures fair,
A little garden, and a limpid brook,
By Nature's own contrivance seem dispos'd ;
No neighbours, but a few poor simple clowns,
Honest and true, with a well-meaning priest :
No faction or domestic fury's rage,
Did e'er disturb the quiet of that place,
When the contending nobles shook the land
With *York* and *Lancaster's* disputed sway.
Your virtue there may find a safe retreat
From the insulting powers of wicked greatness.

J. Sb. Can there be so much happiness in store ?
A cell like that, is all my hopes aspire to.

Haste

Haste then, and thither let us take our flight,
E'er the clouds gather, and the wintry sky
Descends in storms to intercept our passage.

Dum. Will you then go? you glad my very soul!
Banish your fears, cast all your cares on me;
Plenty, and ease, and peace of mind shall wait you,
And make your latter days of life most happy.
Oh, Lady! but I must not, cannot tell you,
How anxious I have been for all your dangers,
And how my heart rejoices at your safety.
So when the spring renews the flow'ry field,
And warns the pregnant nightingale to build,
She seeks the safest shelter of the wood,
Where she may trust her little tuneful brood;
Where no rude swains her shady cell may know,
No serpents climb, nor blasting winds may blow;
Fond of the chosen place, she views it o'er,
Sits there, and wanders throw the grove no more:
Warbling the charms it each returning night,
And loves it with a mother's dear delight. *[Exeunt.]*

A C T III. S C E N E I.

SCENE, *the Court.*

Enter ALICIA, with a paper.

Alic. **T**HIS paper, to the great Protector's hand,
With care and secretly must be convey'd;
His bold ambition now avows its aim,
To pluck the crown from *Edward's* infant-brow,
And fix it on his own. I know he holds
My faithless *Hastings*, adverse to his hopes,
And much devoted to the orphan-king;
On that I built: this paper meets his doubts,
And marks my hated rival as the cause
Of *Hastings'* zeal for his dead master's sons.

Oh

Oh jealousy! thou bane of pleasing friendship,
 Thou worst invader of our tender bosoms;
 How does my rancour poison all our softness?
 And turn our gentle natures into bitterness?
 See where she comes! once my heart's dearest blessing,
 Now my chang'd eyes are blasted with her beauty,
 Loath that known face, and sicken to behold her.

Enter JANE SHORE.

J. Sh. Now whither shall I fly, to find relief?
 What charitable hand will aid me now?
 Will stay my failing steps, support my ruins,
 And heal my wounded mind with balmy comfort?
 Oh, my *Alicia*!

Alic. What new grief is this?
 What unforeseen misfortune has surpriz'd thee,
 That racks thy tender heart thus?

J. Sh. Oh! *Dumont*!

Alic. Say! what of him?

J. Sh. That friendly honest man.
 Whom *Bellmour* brought of late to my assistance,
 On whose kind care, whose diligence and faith,
 My surest trust was built, this very morn
 Was seiz'd on by the cruel hand of pow'r,
 Forc'd from my house, and borne away to prison.

Alic. To prison, said you! can you guess the cause?

J. Sh. Too well, I fear. His bold defence of me,
 Has drawn the vengeance of Lord *Hastings* on him.

Alic. Lord *Hastings*! Hah!

J. Sh. Some fitter time must tell thee
 The tale of my hard hap. Upon the present
 Hang all my poor, my last remaining hopes.
 Within this paper is my suit contained;
 Here, as the princely *Gloster* passes forth,
 I wait to give it on my humble knees,
 And move him for redress.

[*She gives the paper to Alicia, who opens and
 seems to read it.*]

Alic.

Alic. [*Aside.*] Now for a while,
To sting my thoughtless rival to the heart;
To blast her fatal beauties, and divide her
For ever from my perjur'd *Hastings'* eyes:
The wanderer may then look back to me,
And turn to his forsaken home again:
Their fashions are the same, it cannot fail.

[*Pulling out the other paper.*]

J. Sh. But see the great Protector comes this way,
Attended by a train of waiting courtiers.
Give me the paper, friend.

Alic. [*Aside.*] For love and vengeance!

[*She gives her the other paper.*]

Enter the Duke of GLOSTER, Sir RICHARD RATCLIFFE, CATESBY, Courtiers and other Attendants.

J. Sh. [*Kneeling.*] O noble *Gloster*, turn thy gracious
eye,

Incline thy pitying ear to my complaint,
A poor undone, forsaken, helpless woman,
Intreats a little bread for charity,
To feed her wants, and save her life from perishing.

Gloft. Arise, fair dame, and dry your watry eyes.

[*Receiving the paper, and raising her.*]

Beshrew me, but 'twere pity of his heart,
That could refuse a boon to such a suitress.
Y'have got a noble friend to be your advocate;
A worthy and right gentle Lord he is,
And to his trust most true. This present, now,
Some matters of the state detain our leisure;
Those once dispatch'd, we'll call for you anon,
And give your griefs redress. Go to! be comforted.

J. Sh. Good heavens repay your Highness for this
pity,

And show'r down blessings on your princely head.

Come my *Alicia*, reach thy friendly arm,
And help me to support that feeble frame;

That nodding totters with oppressive woe,

And sinks beneath its load. [*Ex. J. Shore and Alic.*]

Gloft.

Gloſt. Now by my holidame !
 Heavy of heart ſhe ſeems, and fore afflicted.
 But thus it is when rude calamity
 Lays its ſtrong gripe upon theſe mincing minions ;
 The dainty gew-gaw-forms diſſolve at once,

[*Seeming to read.*

And ſhiver at the ſhock. What ſays her paper ?
 Ha ! what is this ? come nearer *Ratcliffe*, *Cateſby* !
 Mark the contents, and then divine the meaning:

[*He reads.*

Wonder not, princely *Gloſter*, at the notice
 This paper brings you from a friend unknown ;
Lord Haſtings is inclin'd to call you maſter,
 And kneel to *Richard*, as to *England's* King ;
 But *Shore's* bewitching wife miſleads his heart,
 And draws his ſervice to King *Edward's* ſons :
 Drive her away, you break the charm that holds him,
 And he, and all his powers attend on you.

Rat. 'Tis wonderful !

Cat. The means by which it came,
 Yet's ſtranger too !

Gloſt. You ſaw it given but now.

Rat. She could not know the purport.

Gloſt. No, 'tis plain——

She knows it not, it levels at her life ;
 Should ſhe preſume to prate of ſuch high matters,
 The meddling harlot ! dear ſhe ſhould abide it.

Cat. What hand ſoe're it comes from, be aſſur'd,
 It means your Highneſs well.

Gloſt. Upon the inſtant,
Lord Haſtings will be here ; this morn I mean,
 To prove him to the quick ; then if he flinch,
 No more but this, away with him at once,
 He muſt be mine or nothing——but he comes !
 Draw nearer this way and obſerve me well. [*They whiſper.*

Enter Lord HASTINGS.

I.. Haſt. This fooliſh woman hangs about my heart,
 Lingers and wanders in my fancy ſtill ;

This

This coyness is put on, 'tis art and cunning,
 And worn to urge desire—I must possess her;
 The groom, who lift his sawcy head against me,
 E'er this, is humbled, and repents his daring.
 Perhaps ev'n she may profit by th' example,
 And teach her beauty not to scorn my pow'r.

Gloſt. This do, and wait me e'er the council sits.

[*Exeunt Rat. and Catel.*]

My Lord, y'are well encounter'd, here has been
 A fair petitioner this morning with us;
 Believe me she has won me much to pity her:
 Alas! her gentle nature was not made
 To buffet with adversity. I told her,
 How worthily her cause you had befriended;
 How much for your good sake we meant to do,
 That you had spoke, and all things should be well.

L. Haſt. Your Highness binds me ever to your service.

Gloſt. You know your friendship is most potent with us,
 And shares our power. But of this enough,
 For we have other matters for your ear:
 The state is out of tune; distracting fears,
 And jealous doubts jarr in our public counsels;
 Amidst the wealthy city, murmurs rise,
 Lewd railings, and reproach, on those that rule,
 With open scorn of government; hence credit
 And public trust 'twixt man and man are broke.
 The golden streams of commerce are with-held,
 Which fed the wants of needy hinds, and artizans,
 Who therefore curse the great, and their rebellion.

L. Haſt. The resty knaves are over-run with ease,
 As plenty ever is the nurse of faction:
 If in good days, like these, the headstrong herd
 Grow madly wanton and repine; it is
 Because the reins of power are held too slack,
 And reverend authority of late
 Has worn a face of mercy more than justice.

Gloſt. Beshrew my heart! but you have well divin'd
 The source of these disorders. Who can wonder
 If riot and mis-rule o'turn the realm,

When the crown fits upon a baby-brow?
 Plainly to speak; hence comes the gen'ral cry,
 And sum of all complaint: 'twill ne'er be well
 With *England* (thus they talk) while children govern.

L. Hast. 'Tis true the King is young; but what of
 that?

We feel no want of *Edward's* riper years,
 While *Gloster's* valour, and most princely wisdom,
 So well supply our infant-sov'reign's place,
 His youth's support, and guardian of his throne.

Gloft. The council (much I'm bound to thank 'em
 for't)

Have plac'd a pageant sceptre in my hand,
 Barren of pow'r, and subject to controul;
 Scorn'd by my foes, and useless to my friends.
 Oh, worthy Lord! were mine the rule indeed,
 I think, I should not suffer rank offence
 At large to lord it in the common-weal;
 Nor wou'd the realm be rent by discord thus,
 Thus fear and doubt betwixt disputed titles.

L. Hast. Of this I am to learn; as not supposing
 A doubt like this——

Gloft. Ay, marry! but there is——
 And that of much concern. Have you not heard
 How on a late occasion, Doctor *Sharv*
 Has mov'd the people much about the lawfulness
 Of *Edward's* issue? by right grave authority
 Of learning and religion, plainly proving,
 A bastard-scion never should be grafted
 Upon a royal stock; from thence, at full
 Discourfing on my brother's former contract
 To Lady Elizabeth *Lucy*, long before
 His jolly match with that same buxom widow
 The Queen he left behind him——

L. Hast. I'll befall
 Such meddling priests, who kindle up confusion,
 And vex the quiet world with their vain scruples;
 By heav'n 'tis done in perfect spight of peace.
 Did not the King,

Our royal *Edward*, in concurrence
With his estates assembled, well determine
What course the sov'reign rule should take hencefor-
ward?

When shall the deadly hate of faction cease,
When shall our long divided land have rest,
If every peevish, moody malecontent
Shall set the senseless rabble in an uproar?
Fright them with dangers, and perplex their brains,
Each day with some fantastic giddy change?

Gloſt. What if ſome patriot for the public good,
Should vary from your ſcheme, new-mould the ſtate?

L. Haß. Curse on the innovating hand attempts it!
Remember him, the villian, righteous heaven,
In thy great day of vengeance : blast the traitor
And his pernicious counsels : who for wealth,
For pow'r, the pride of greatness, or revenge,
Would plunge his native land in civil wars.

Gloft. You go too far, my Lord.

L. *Hast.* Your Highness's pardon—
Have we so soon forgot those days of ruin,
When *York* and *Lancaster* drew forth the battles !—
When, like a matron, butcher'd by her sons,
And cast beside some common way a spectacle
Of horror and affright to passers-by,
Our groaning country bled at every vein,
When murders, rapes, and massacres prevail'd ;
When churches, palaces, and cities blaz'd ;
When insolence and barbarism triumph'd
And swept away distinction ; peasants trod
Upon the necks of nobles : low were laid
The reverend crosier, and the holy mitre,
And desolation cover'd all the land ;
Who can remember this, and not, like me,
Here vow to sheath a dagger in his heart,
Whose damn'd ambition would renew those horrors,
And set, once more, that scene of blood before us ?

Gloss. How now! so hot!

L. *Hast.* So brave, and so resolv'd.

Gloß.

Gloſt. Is then our friendship of ſo little moment,
That you could arm your hand againſt my life?

L. Haſt. I hope your Highneſs does not think I mean
it,

No, heaven forbid that e'er your princely perſon
Should come within the ſcope of my reſentment.

Gloſt. Oh! noble *Haſtings*! nay, I muſt embrace
you; [Embraces him.

By holy Paul! y'are a right honeſt man;
The time is full of danger and diſtruſt,
And warns us to be wary. Hold me not
Too apt for jealousy and light ſurmize,
If when I meant to lodge you next my heart,
I put your truth to trial. Keep your loyalty,
And live your king and country's beſt ſupport:
For me, I aſk no more than honour gives,
To think me yours, and rank me with your friends.

L. Haſt. Accept what thanks a grateful heart ſhould
pay,

Oh! princely *Gloſter*! judge me not ungentle,
Of manners rude, and insolent of ſpeech,
If when the public ſafety is in queſtion,
My zeal flows warm and eager from my tongue.

Gloſt. Enough of this: to deal in wordy compliment
Is much againſt the plainneſs of my nature;
I judge you by myſelf, a clear true ſpirit,
And, as ſuch, once more join you to my boſom;
Farewell, and be my friend. [Exit Gloſter.

L. Haſt. I am not read,
Nor ſkill'd and practis'd in the arts of greatneſs,
To kindle thus, and give a ſcope to paſſion.
The Duke is ſurely noble; but he touch'd me
Ev'n on the tend'reſt point; the maſter-ſtring
That makes moſt harmony or diſcord to me.
I own the glorious ſubject fires my breaſt,
And my ſoul's darling paſſion ſtands confeſt;
Beyond or love's or friendſhip's ſacred band,
Beyond myſelf I prize my native land:

On this foundation would I build my fame,
 And emulate the *Greek* and *Roman* name;
 Think *England's* peace bought cheaply with my blood,
 And die with pleasure for my country's good. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE *continues.*

Enter Duke of GLOSTER, RATCLIFFE, and CATESBY.

Gloft. **T**HIS was the sum of all; that he would brook
 No alteration in the present state.

Marry! at last, the testy gentleman
 Was almost mov'd to bid us bold defiance;
 But there I drop'd the argument, and changing
 The first design and purport of my speech,
 I prais'd his good affection to young *Edward*,
 And left him to believe my thoughts like his.
 Proceed we then in this foremention'd matter,
 As nothing bound or trusting to his friendship.

Rat. Ill does it thus befall. I cou'd have wish'd
 This lord had stood with us. His friends are wealthy,
 Thereto, his own possessions large and mighty;
 The vassals and dependants on his power
 Firm in adherence, ready, bold and many;
 His name had been of vantage to your Highness,
 And stood our present purpose much in stead.

Gloft. This wayward and perverse declining from us,
 Has warranted at full the friendly notice,
 Which we this morn receiv'd. I hold it certain,
 This pulling whining harlot rules his reason,
 And prompts his zeal for *Edward's* bastard-brood.

Cat. If she have such dominion o'er his heart,
 And turn it at her will, you rule her fate;
 And should by inference and apt deduction,
 Be arbiter of his. Is not her bread
 The very means immediate to her being,
 The bounty of your hand! why does she live,

If not to yield obedience to your pleasure,
To speak, to act, to think as you command?

Rat. Let her instruct her tongue to bear your message;
Teach every grace to smile in your behalf,
And her deluding eyes to gloat for you;
His ductile reason will be woond about,
Be led and turn'd again, say and unsay,
Receive the yoke, and yield exact obedience.

Gloss. Your counsel likes me well, it shall be follow'd:
She waits without, attending on her suit.
Go, call her in, and leave us here alone.

[*Ex. Rat. and Cat.*]

How poor a thing is he, how worthy scorn,
Who leaves the guidance of imperial manhood
To such a paltry piece of stuff as this is!
A moppet made of prettiness and pride;
That oftner does her giddy fancies change,
Than glittering dew-drops in the sun do colours——
Now shame upon it! was our reason given
For such a use? to be thus puff'd about
Like a dry leaf, an idle straw, a feather,
The sport of every whiffling blast that blows?
Beshrew my heart, but it is wondrous strange;
Sure there is something more than witchcraft in them,
That masters ev'n the wisest of us all.

Enter JANE SHORE.

Oh! you are come most fitly. We have ponder'd
On this your grievance: and tho' some there are,
Nay, and those great ones too, who wou'd enforce
The rigour of our power to afflict you,
And bear a heavy hand, yet fear not you,
We've ta'en you to our favour, our protection
Shall stand between, and shield you from mishap.

J. Sh. The blessings of a heart with anguish broken,
And rescu'd from despair, attend your Highness.
Alas! my gracious Lord! what have I done
To kindle such relentless wrath against me?
If in the days of all my past offences,

When

When most my heart was lifted with delight,
 If I with-held my morsel from the hungry,
 Forgot the widow's want, and orphan's cry ;
 If I have known a good I have not shar'd,
 Nor call'd the poor to take his portion with me ;
 Let my worst enemies stand forth, and now
 Deny the succour, which I gave not then.

Gloft. Marry ! there are, tho' I believe them not,
 Who say you meddle in affairs of state :
 That you presume to prattle, like a busy body,
 Give your advice and teach the lords o'th' council
 What fits the order of the common-well.

J. Sh. Oh that the busy world, at least in this,
 Would take example from a wretch like me !
 None then would waste their hours in foreign thoughts,
 Forget themselves, and what concerns their peace,
 To tread the mazes of fantastic falsehood,
 To haunt her idle sounds and flying tales,
 Thro' all the giddy noisy courts of rumour ;
 Malicious slander never wou'd have leisure
 To search with prying eyes for faults abroad,
 If all, like me, consider'd their own hearts,
 And wept the sorrows which they found at home.

Gloft. Go to ! I know your pow'r, and tho' I trust
 not

To ev'ry breath of fame, I'm not to learn
 That *Hastings* is profess'd your loving vassal.
 But fair befall your beauty : use it wisely,
 And it may stand your fortunes much in stead ;
 Give back your forfeit-land with large increase,
 And place you high in safety and in honour :
 Nay, I could point a way, the which pursuing,
 You shall not only bring yourself advantage,
 But give the realm much worthy cause to thank you.

J. Sh. Oh ! where or how !—can my unworthy hand
 Become an instrument of good to any ?
 Instruct your lowly slave, and let me fly
 To yield obedience to your dread command.

Gl. Why that's well said—thus then—observe me well,
The state, for many high and potent reasons,
Deeming my brother *Edward's* sons unfit
For the imperial weight of *England's* crown——

J. Sb. Alas! for pity.

[*Aside.*

Gloft. Therefore have resolv'd
To set aside their unavailing infancy,
And vest the sov'reign rule in abler hands.
This, tho' of great importance to the public,
Hastings, for very peevishness and spleen,
Does stubbornly oppose.

J. Sb. Does he! does *Hastings*?

Gloft. Ay, *Hastings*.

J. Sb. Reward him for the noble deed, just heav'ns;
For this one action, guard him and distinguish him
With signal mercies, and with great deliverance,
Save him from wrong, adversity and shame.
Let never-fading honours flourish round him,
And consecrate his name ev'n to time's end:
Let him know nothing else but good on earth,
And everlasting blessedness hereafter.

Gloft. How now!

J. Sb. The poor forsaken, royal little ones!
Shall they be left a prey to savage power?
Can they lift up their harmless hands in vain,
Or cry to heav'n for help, and not be heard?
Impossible! O gallant, generous *Hastings*,
Go on, pursue! assert the sacred cause:
Stand forth, thou proxy of all-ruling providence,
And save the friendless infants from oppression.
Saints shall assist thee with prevailing prayers,
And warring angels combat on thy side.

Gloft. You're passing rich in this same heav'nly speech,
And spend it at your pleasure. Nay, but mark me!
My favour is not bought with words like these.
Go to——you'll teach your tongue another tale.

J. Sb. No, tho' the royal *Edward* has undone me,
He was my king, my gracious master, still;
He lov'd me too, tho' 'twas a guilty flame,

And

And fatal to my peace, yet still he lov'd me ;
 With fondness, and with tenderness he doated,
 Dwelt in my eyes, and liv'd but in my smiles.
 And can I——oh my heart abhors the thoughts ;
 Stand by, and see his children robb'd of right ?

Gloß. Dare not, ev'n for thy soul, to thwart me further ;

None of your arts, your feigning, and your foolery,
 Your dainty squeamish coying it to me.
 Go—to your lord, your paramour, begone ;
 Liss in his ear, hang wanton on his neck,
 And play your monkey gambols o'er to him :
 You know my purpose, look that you pursue it,
 And make him yeild obedience to my will.
 Do it—or woe upon thy harlot's head.

J. Sh. Oh that my tongue had every grace of speech ;
 Great and commanding as the breath of kings,
 Sweet as the poets numbers, and prevailing
 As soft persuasion to a love sick maid ?
 That I had art and eloquence divine !
 To pay my duty to my master's ashes,
 And plead till death the cause of injur'd innocence.

Gloß. Ha ! do'st thou brave me, minion ! do'st thou know

How vile, how very a wretch, my pow'r can make thee ?
 That I can let loose fear, distress and famine,
 To hunt thy heels, like hell hounds, thro' the world ;
 That I can place thee in such abject state,
 As help shall never find thee ; where repining,
 Thou shalt sit down and gnaw the earth for anguish,
 Groan to the pitiless winds without return,
 Howl like the midnight wolf amidst the desert
 And curse thy life in bitterness and misery ?

J. Sh. Let me be branded for the public scorn,
 Turn'd forth, and driven to wander like a vagabond,
 Be friendless and forsaken, seek my bread
 Upon the barren wild, and desolate waste,
 Feed on my sighs, and drink my falling tears ;

E'er I consent to teach my lips injustice,
Or wrong the orphan who has none to save him.

Gloss. 'Tis well—we'll try the temper of your heart,
What, ho! who waits without!

Enter RATCLIFFE, CATESBY, and attendants.

Rat. Your Highness' pleasure——

Gloss. Go some of you, and turn this strumpet forth;
Spurn her into the street, there let her perish,
And rot upon a dunghill. Thro' the city
See it proclaim'd, that none, on pain of death,
Presume to give her comfort, food, or harbour;
Who ministers the smallest comfort, dies.
Her house, her costly furniture and wealth,
The purchase of her loose luxurious life,
We seize on, for the profit and the state.
Away! begone!

J. Sh. O thou most righteous Judge,——
Humbly, behold, I bow myself to thee,
And own thy justice in this hard decree:
No longer then my ripe offences spare,
But what I merit, let me learn to bear.
Yet since 'tis all my wretchedness can give,
For my past crimes my forfeit life receive;
No pity for my suff'rings here I crave,
And only hope forgiveness in the grave.

[Exit. J. Shore, guarded by Catesby and others.]

Gloss. So much of this. Your project's at an end:

[To Ratcliffe.]

This idle toy, this hidling scorns my power,
And sets us all at nought. See that a guard
Be ready at my call——

Rat. The council waits

Upon your Highness leisure——

Gloss. Bid 'em enter.

Enter

Enter the Duke of BUCKINGHAM, Earl of DERBY, Bp. of ELY, L. HASTINGS and others, as to the council. The Duke of GLOSTER takes his place at the upper end; then the rest sit.

Derb. In happy time are we assembled here,
To point the day and fix the solemn pomp,
For placing *England's* crown with all due rites,
Upon our sov'reign *Edward's* youthful brow.

L. Hast. Some busy meddling knaves, 'tis said there
are,

As such will still be prating, who presume
To carp and cavil at his royal right;
Therefore I hold it fitting, with the soonest
T'appoint the order of the coronation;
So to approve our duty to the King,
And stay the babling of such vain gainfayers.

Derb. We all attend to know your Highness' pleasure.
[*To Gloster.*]

Glost. My Lords, a set of worthy men you are,
Prudent and just, and careful for the state.
Therefore to your most grave determination,
I yield myself in all things; and demand
What punishment your wisdom shall think meet
T'inflit upon those damnable contrivers,
Who shall with potions, charms, and witching drugs,
Practise against our person and our life.

L. Hast. So much I hold the King your Highness
debtor,

So precious are you to the common-weal,
That I presume, not only for myself,
But in behalf of these my noble brothers,
To say, whoe'er they be, they merit death.

Glost. Then judge yourselves, convince your eyes of
truth,

Behold my arm thus blasted, dry and wither'd,

[*Pulling up his sleeve.*]

Shrunk like a foul abortion, and decay'd,
Like some untimely product of the seasons,
Robb'd of its properties of strength and office.

This

This is the sorcery of *Edward's* wife,
 Who in conjunction with that harlot *Shore*,
 And other like confed'rate mid-night hagg,
 By force of potent spells, of bloody characters.
 And conjuration horrible to hear,
 Call fiends and spectres from the yawning deep,
 And set the ministers of hell at work,
 To torture and despoil me of my life.

L. Hast. If they have done this deed——

Gloß. If they have done it!

Talk'st thou to me of *Ifs*, audacious traitor!
 Thou art that strumpet witch's chief abettor,
 The patron and comploter of her mischiefs,
 And join'd in this contrivance for my death.
 Nay, start not, Lords,—what ho! a guard there firs!

Enter Guard.

Lord Hastings, I arrest thee of high treason,
 Seize him, and bear him instantly away.
 He sha'not live an hour. By holy *Paul*!
 I will not dine before his head be brought me:
Ratcliffe, stay you, and see that it be done.
 The rest that love me, rise and follow me.

[Exeunt Gloßier and Lords following.]

Remain Lord Hastings, Ratcliffe, and guards.

L. Hast. What! and no more but this—how, to the scaffold!

Oh gentle *Ratcliffe*, tell me, do I hold thee?
 Or if I dream, what shall I do to wake?
 To break, to struggle thro' this dread confusion?
 For surely death itself is not so painful
 As is this sudden horror and surprize.

Rat. You heard, the Duke's commands to me were absolute,

Therefore, my Lord, address you to your shrift,
 With all good speed you may. Summon your courage,
 And be yourself; for you must die this instant.

L. Hast. Yes, *Ratcliffe*, I will take thy friendly counsel,

And

And die as a man should; 'tis somewhat hard
 To call my scatter'd spirits home at once:
 But since what must be, must be——let necessity
 Supply the place of time and preparation,
 And arm me for the blow. 'Tis but to die,
 'Tis but to venture on that common hazard
 Which many a time in battle I have run;
 'Tis but to do, what, at that very moment,
 In many nations of the peopled earth,
 A thousand and a thousand shall do with me:
 'Tis but to close my eyes, and shut out day-light,
 To view no more the wicked ways of men,
 No longer to behold the tyrant *Gloster*,
 And be a weeping witness of the woes,
 The desolation, slaughter, and calamities,
 Which he shall bring on this unhappy land.

Enter ALICIA.

Alic. Stand off! and let me pass——I will, I must,
 Catch him once more in these despairing arms,
 And hold him to my heart——oh *Hastings*, *Hastings*!

L. Hast. Alas! why com'st thou at this dreadful
 moment,

To fill me with new terrors, new distractions,
 To turn me wild with thy distemper'd rage,
 And shock the peace of my departing soul?
 Away! I prithee leave me!

Alic. Stop a minute——
 'Till my full griefs find passage.——Oh the tyrant!
 Perdition fall on *Gloster's* head and mine.

L. Hast. What means thy frantic grief?

Alic. I cannot speak——
 But I have murder'd thee——oh I could tell thee!

L. Hast. Speak and give ease to thy conflicting pas-
 sion;

Be quick, nor keep me longer in suspense,
 Time presses, and a thousand crowding thoughts
 Break in at once; this way and that they snatch,
 They tear my hurry'd soul: all claim attention,
 And

And yet not one is heard. Oh speak and leave me,
For I have business wou'd employ an age,
And but a minute's time to get it done in.

Alic. That, that's my grief—'tis I that urge thee on.
Thus haunt thee to the toil, sweep thee from earth,
And drive thee down this precipice of fate.

L. Haft. Thy reason is grown wild. Could thy weak
hand

Bring on this mighty ruin? If it could,
What have I done so grievous to thy soul,
So deadly, so beyond the reach of pardon,
That nothing but my life can make atonement?

Alic. Thy cruel scorn had stung me to the heart,
And set my burning botom all in flames:
Raving and mad I flew to my revenge,
And writ I know not what—told the Protector,
That *Shore's* detested wife by wiles had won thee,
To plot against his greatness—he believ'd it,
(Oh dire event of my pernicious counsel)
And while I meant destruction on her head,
H'has turn'd it all on thine.

L. Haft. Accursed jealousy!
O merciless, wild and unforgiving fiend!
Blindfold it runs to undistinguish'd mischief,
And murders all it meets. Curs'd be its rage,
For there is none so deadly; doubly curs'd
Be all those easy fools who give it harbour:
Who turn a monster loose among mankind,
Fiercer than famine, war, or spotted pestilence;
Baneful as death, and horrible as hell

Alic. If thou wilt curse, curse rather thine own
falshood,
Curse the lewd maxims of thy perjur'd sex,
Which taught thee first to laugh at faith and justice,
To scorn the solemn sanctity of oaths,
And make a jest of a poor woman's ruin:
Curse thy proud heart and thy insulting tongue,
That rais'd this fatal fury in my soul,
And urg'd my vengeance to undo us both.

L. Haft.

L. Haft. Oh thou inhuman! turn thy eyes away,
And blast me not with their destructive beams:
Why shou'd I curse thee with my dying breath?
Begone! and let me sigh it out in peace.

Alic Canst thou.—oh cruel *Hastings*, leave me thus!
Hear me, I beg thee—I conjure thee, hear me!
While with an agonizing heart I swear,
By all the pangs I feel, by all the sorrows,
The terrors and despair thy loss shall give me,
My hate was on my rival bent alone.
Oh! had I once divin'd, false as thou art,
A danger to thy life, I would have dy'd,
I would have met it for thee, and made bare
My ready faithful breast to save thee from it.

L. Haft. Now mark! and tremble at heav'n's just
award,
While thy insatiate wrath and fell revenge
Pursu'd the innocence which never wrong'd thee,
Behold! the mischief falls on thee and me!
Remorse and heaviness of heart shall wait thee,
And everlasting anguish be thy portion:
For me, the snares of death are wound about me,
And now, in one poor moment, I am gone.
Oh! if thou hast one tender thought remaining,
Fly to thy closet, fall upon thy knee,
And recommend my parting soul to mercy.

Alic Oh! yet, before I go for ever from thee,
Turn thee in gentleness and pity to me, [*Kneeling.*
And in compassion of my strong affliction,
Say, is it possible you can forgive
The fatal rashness of ungovern'd love?
For oh! 'tis certain, if I had not lov'd thee,
Beyond my peace, my reason, fame and life,
Desir'd to death, and doated to distraction,
This day of horror never should have known us.

L. Haft. Oh! rise, and let me hush thy stormy sor-
rows, [*Raising her.*
Assuage thy tears, for I will chide no more,
No more upbraid thee, thou unhappy fair-one.

I see the hand of heav'n is arm'd against me,
 And, in mysterious providence, decrees
 To punish me by thy mistaking hand.
 Most righteous doom! for, oh! while I behold thee,
 Thy wrongs rise up in terrible array,
 And charge thy ruin on me; thy fair fame,
 Thy spotless beauty, innocence and youth,
 Dishonour'd, blasted, and betray'd by me.

Alic. And does thy heart relent for my undoing?
 Oh! that inhuman *Glosser* could be mov'd,
 But half so easily as I can pardon!

L. Haft. Here then exchange we mutually forgiveness,
 So may the guilt of all my broken vows,
 My perjuries to thee be all forgotten,
 As here my soul acquits thee of my death,
 As here I part without one angry thought,
 As here I leave thee with the softest tenderness,
 Mourning the chance of our disastrous loves,
 And begging heav'n to bless and to support thee.

Rat. My Lord, dispatch; the Duke has sent to
 chide me
 For loitering in my duty——

L. Haft. I obey.

Alic. Insatiate, savage monster! is a moment
 So tedious to thy malice? Oh! repay him
 Thou great avenger, give him blood for blood:
 Guilt haunt him! fiends pursue him! lightnings blast
 him!

Some horrid, cursed kind of death o'ertake him,
 Sudden, and in the fulness of his sins!
 That he may know how terrible it is,
 To want that moment he denies thee now.

L. Haft. 'Tis all in vain, this rage that tears thy
 bosom,
 Like a poor bird that flutters in its cage,
 Thou beat'st thyself to death. Retire I beg thee;
 To see thee thus, thou know'st not how it wounds me,
 Thy agonies are added to my own,

And

And make the burden more than I can bear.
Farewell,——Good angels visit thy afflictions,
And bring thee peace and comfort from above.

Alic. Oh! stab me to the heart, some pitying hand,
Now strike me dead——

L. Hast. One thing I had forgot——
I charge thee by our present common miseries,
By our past loves, if yet they have a name,
By all thy hopes of peace here and hereafter,
Let not the rancour of thy hate pursue
The innocence of thy unhappy friend :
Thou know'st who 'tis I mean; oh! should'st thou
wrong her,

Just heav'n shall double all thy woes upon thee,
And make 'em know no end—Remember this
As the last warning of a dying man :
Farewell for ever! *[The guards carry Hastings off.]*

Alic. For ever? oh! for ever!
Oh! who can bear to be a wretch for ever?
My rival too! his last thoughts hung on her:
And, as he parted, left a blessing for her!
Shall she be blest, and I be curst, for ever!
No; since her fatal beauty was the cause
Of all my suff'rings, let her share my pains:
Let her, like me, of ev'ry joy forlorn,
Devote the hour when such a wretch was born:
Like me to darkness and to desarts run,
Abhor the day, and curse the golden sun;
Cast ev'ry good, and ev'ry hope behind:
Detest the works of nature, loath mankind:
Like me, with cries distracted fill the air;
Tear her poor bosom, rend her frantic hair;
And prove the torments of the last despair. *[Exit.]*

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE, *the Street.**Enter BELLMOUR and SHORE.**Sh.* **Y**OU saw her then?

Bell. I met her as returning
 In solemn penance from the public cross :
 Before her, certain rascal officers,
 Slaves in authority, the knaves of justice,
 Proclaim'd the tyrant *Gloster's* cruel orders.
 On either side her, march'd an ill-look'd priest,
 Who with severe, with horrid haggard eyes,
 Did ever and anon by turns upbraid her,
 And thunder in her trembling ear damnation.
 Around her, numberless the rabble flow'd,
 Should'ring each other, crowding for a view,
 Gaping and gazing, taunting and reviling ;
 Some pitying, but those, alas ! how few !
 The most, such iron-hearts we are, and such
 The base barbarity of human kind,
 With insolence and leud reproach pursu'd her,
 Hooting and railing, and with villainous hands
 Gath'ring the filth from out the common ways,
 To hurl upon her head.

Sh. Inhuman dogs !
 How did she bear it !

Bell. With the gentlest patience,
 Submissive, sad, and lowly was her look ;
 A burning taper in her hand she bore,
 And on her shoulders carelessly confus'd
 With loose neglect her lovely tresses hung ;
 Upon her cheek a faintish flush was spread.
 Feeble she seem'd, and sorely smit with pain,
 While bare-foot as she trod the flinty pavement,

Her

Her footsteps all along were mark'd with blood.
 Yet silent still she pass'd and unrepining;
 Her streaming eyes bent ever on the earth,
 Except when in some bitter pang of sorrow,
 To heav'n she seem'd in fervent zeal to raise,
 And beg that mercy man deny'd her here.

Sb. When was this piteous sight?

Bell. These last two days,
 You know my care was wholly bent on you,
 To find the happy means of your deliverance,
 Which but for *Hastings's* death I had not gain'd.
 During that time, altho' I have not seen her,
 Yet divers trusty messengers I've sent,
 To wait about, and watch a fit convenience
 To give her some relief; but all in vain:
 A churlish guard attends upon her steps,
 Who menace those with death that bring her comfort,
 And drive all succour from her.

Sb. Let 'em threaten,
 Let proud oppression prove its fiercest malice;
 So heav'n befriend my soul, as here I vow
 To give her help, and share one fortune with her.

Bell. Mean you to see her thus, in your own form?

Sb. I do.

Bell. And have you thought upon the consequence?

Sb. What is there I should fear?

Bell. Have you examin'd
 Into your inmost heart, and try'd at leisure
 The sev'ral secret springs that move the passions?
 Has mercy fix'd her empire there so sure,
 That wrath and vengeance never may return?
 Can you resume a husband's name, and bid
 That wakeful dragon, fierce resentment, sleep?

Sb. Why dost thou search so deep, and urge my memory,
 To conjure up my wrongs to life again?
 I have long labour'd to forget myself,
 To think on all time backward, like a space,
 Idle and void, where nothing e're had being;

But

But thou hast peopled it again ; revenge
 And jealousy renew their horrid forms,
 Shoot all their fires, and drive me to distraction.

Bell. Far be the thought from me ! my care was
 only

To arm you for the meeting : better were it
 Never to see her, than to let that name
 Recal forgotten rage, and make the husband
 Destroy the gen'rous pity of *Dumont*

Sh. Oh ! thou hast set my busy brain at work,
 And now she musters up a train of images,
 Which to preserve my peace, I had cast aside,
 And sunk in deep oblivion.—Oh that form !
 That angel-face on which my dotage hung !
 How have I gaz'd upon her ! till my soul
 With very eagerness went forth towards her,
 And issu'd at my eyes——Was there a gem
 Which the sun ripens in the Indian mine,
 Or the rich bosom of the ocean yields,
 What was there art could make, or wealth cou'd buy,
 Which I have left unsought, to deck her beauty ?
 What could her King do more ?——and yet she fled.

Bell. Away with that sad fancy.—

Sh. Oh ! that day !

The thought of it must live for ever with me.
 I met her, *Bellmour*, when the royal Spoiler
 Bore her in triumph from my widow'd home !
 Within his chariot by his side she sat,
 And listen'd to his talk with downward looks ;
 'Till sudden as she chanc'd aside to glance,
 Her eyes encounter'd mine—oh ! then my friend !
 Oh ! who can paint my grief and her amazement !
 As at the stroke of death, twice turn'd she pale,
 And twice a burning crimson blush'd all o'er her ;
 Then, with a shriek heart-wounding loud she cry'd,
 While down her cheeks the gushing torrent ran
 Fast falling on her hands, which thus she wrung——
 Mov'd at her grief, the tyrant ravisher,
 With courteous action woo'd her oft to turn ;

Earnest

Earneſt he ſeem'd to plead ; but all in vain ;
 Ev'n to the laſt ſhe bent her ſight towards me,
 And follow'd me——till I had loſt myſelf.

Bell. Alas ! for pity ! oh ! thoſe ſpeaking tears ?
 Could they be falſe ? did ſhe not ſuffer with you ?
 And tho' the King by force poſſeſs'd her perſon,
 Her unconfenting heart dwelt ſtill with you :
 If all her former woes were not enough,
 Look on her now, behold her where ſhe wanders,
 Hunted to death, diſtreſs'd on every ſide,
 With no one hand to help ; and tell me then,
 If ever miſery were known like hers ?

Sb. And can ſhe bear it ? can that delicate frame
 Endure the beating of a ſtorm ſo rude ?
 Can ſhe, for whom the various ſeaſons chang'd,
 To court the appetite, and crown her board,
 For whom the foreign vintages were preſs'd,
 For whom the merchant ſpread his ſilken ſtores,
 Can ſhe——
 Intreat for bread, and want the needful rayment,
 To wrap her ſhivering boſom from the weather ?
 When ſhe was mine, no care came ever nigh her.
 I thought the gentleſt breeze that wakes the ſpring
 Too rough to breath upon her ; chearfulneſs
 Danc'd all the day before her ; and at night
 Soft ſlumbers waited on her downy pillow——
 Now ſad and ſhelterleſs, perhaps, ſhe lies,
 Where piercing winds blow ſharp, and the chill rain
 Drops from ſome pent houſe on her wretched head,
 Drenches her locks, and kills her with the cold.
 It is too much——hence with her paſt offences,
 They are aton'd at full—why ſtay we then ?
 Oh ! let us haſte, my friend, and find her out.

Bell. Somewhere about this quarter of the town,
 I hear the poor abandon'd creature lingers :
 Her guard, tho' ſet with ſtricteſt watch to keep
 All food and friendſhip from her, yet permit her
 To wander in the ſtreets, there chuſe her bed,
 And reſt her head on what cold ſtone ſhe pleaſes.

Sb.

Sb. Here let us then divide; each in his round-
To search her sorrows out, whose hap it is
First to behold her, this way let him lead
Her fainting steps, and meet we hear together [*Exeunt.*

Enter JANE SHORE, her hair hanging loose on her shoulders, and bare-footed.

J. Sb. Yet, yet endure, nor murmur, oh! my soul;
For are not thy transgressions great and numberless?
Do they not cover thee like rising floods,
And press thee like a weight of waters down?
Does not the hand of righteousness afflict thee?
And who shall plead against it? who shall say
To pow'r almighty, 'Thou hast done enough?
Or bid his dreadful rod of vengeance, stay?
Wait then with patience, till the circling hours
Shall bring the time of thy appointed rest
And lay thee down in death. The hireling thus
With labour drudges out the painful day,
And often looks with long expecting eyes
To see the shadows rise, and be dismiss'd.
And hark! methinks the roar that late pursu'd me,
Sinks, like the murmurs of a falling wind
And softens into silence. Does revenge
And malice then grow weary and forsake me?
My guard too, that observ'd me still so close,
Tire in the task of their inhuman office,
And loiter far behind. Alas! I faint,
My spirits fail at once—this is the door
Of my *Alicia*—blessed opportunity!
I'll steal a little succour from her goodness,
Now, while no eye observes me. [*She knocks at the door.*

Enter SERVANT.

Is your Lady,
My gentle friend, at home? oh! bring me to her.

(*Going in.*)

Ser. Hold mistress, whither wou'd you?

(*Putting her back.*)

J. Sb.

J. Sh. Do you not know me?

Ser. I know you well, and know my orders too.

You must not enter here——

J. Sh. Tell my *Alicia*,

'Tis I would see her.

Ser. She is ill at ease,
And will admit no visiter.

J. Sh. But tell her

'Tis I, her friend, the partner of her heart,

Wait at the door and beg——

Ser. 'Tis all in vain——

Go hence, and howl to those that will regard you.

[Shuts the door, and exit.]

S. Sh. It was not always thus ; the time has been,
When this unfriendly door, that bars my passage,
Flew wide, and almost leap'd from off its hinges
To give me entrance here ; when this good house
Has pour'd forth all its dwellings to receive me ;
When my approach has made a little holy-day,
And ev'ry face was dress'd in smiles to meet me :
But now 'tis otherwise ; and those who bless'd me,
Now curse me to my face. Why should I wander,
Stray further on, for I can die ev'n here !

[She sits down at the door.]

Enter ALICIA in disorder ; two servants following.

Alic. What wretch art thou ? whose misery and baseness

Hangs on my door ; whose hateful whine of woe
Breaks in upon my sorrows, and distracts
My jarring senses with thy beggar's cry ?

J. Sh. A very beggar, and a wretch indeed ;
One driv'n by strong calamity to seek
For succour here ; one perishing for want ?
Whose hunger has not tasted food these three days ;
And humbly ask, for charity's dear sake,
A draught of water and a little bread.

Alic. And dost thou come to me, to me, for bread ?
I know thee not—Go——hunt for it abroad,

Where

Where wanton hands upon the earth have scatter'd it,
Or cast it on the waters—Mark the eagle,
And hungry vulture, where they wind the prey :
Watch where the ravens of the valley feed,
And seek thy food with them—I know thee not.

J. Sb. And yet there was a time, when my *Alicia*
Has thought unhappy *Shore* her dearest blessing ;
And mourn'd that live-long day she pass'd without me.
When pair'd like turtles, we were still together ;
When often as we prattled arm in arm,
Inclining fondly to me she has sworn,
She lov'd me more than all the world beside.

Alic. Ha ! say'st thou ? let me look upon thee well—
'Tis true—I know thee now—a mischief on thee ?
Thou art that fatal fair, that cursed she,
That set my brain a madding. Thou hast robb'd me ;
Thou hast undone me—murder ! oh my *Hastings* !
See his pale bloody head shoots glaring by me !
Give him me back again, thou soft deluder,
Thou beauteous witch—

J. Sb. Alas ! I never wrong'd you—
Oh ! then be good to me ; have pity on me ;
Thou never knew'st the bitterness of want,
And may'st thou never know it. Oh ! bestow
Some poor remain, the voiding of thy table,
A morsel to support my famish'd soul.

Alic. Avaunt ! and come not near me—

J. Sb. To thy hand
I trusted all, gave my whole store to thee ;
Nor do I ask it back, allow me but
The smallest pittance, give me but to eat,
Lest I fall down and perish here before thee.

Alic. Nay ! tell not me ! where is the King, thy
Edward,
And all the smiling crying train of courtiers,
That bent the knee before thee ?

J. Sb. Oh ! for mercy !

Alic. Mercy ! I know it not—for I am miserable.
I'll give thee misery, for here she dwells ;

This

This is her house, where the sun never dawns,
 The bird of night sits screaming o'er the roof,
 Grim spectres sweep along the horrid gloom,
 And nought is heard but wailings and lamentings.
 Hark! something cracks above! it shakes, it totters!
 And see the nodding ruin falls to crush me!
 'Tis fall'n, 'tis here! I feel it on my brain!

1 *Serv.* This sight disorders her——

2 *Serv.* Retire, dear Lady,——

And leave this woman——

Alic. Let her take my counsel!

Why should'st thou be a wretch? stab, tear thy heart,
 And rid thyself of this detested being,
 I wo't not linger long behind thee here.

A waving flood of blewish fire swells o'er me;
 And now 'tis out, and I am drown'd in blood.
 Ha! what art thou! thou horrid headless trunk;
 It is my *Hastings*! see! he wafts me on!
 Away! I go! I fly! I follow thee.

But come not thou with mischief-making beauty
 To interpose between us, look not on him,
 Give thy fond arts and thy delusions o'er;
 For thou shalt never, never part us more.

[She runs off; her servants following.]

J. Sh! Alas she raves; her brain, I fear is turn'd
 In mercy look upon her, gracious heav'n,
 Nor visit her for any wrong to me,
 Sure I am near upon my journey's end;
 My head runs round, my eyes begin to fail,
 And dancing shadows swim before my sight:
 I can no more. *[lies down]* Receive me thou cold earth,
 Thou common parent, take me to thy bosom,
 And let me rest with thee.

Enter BELLMOUR.

Bell. Upon the ground!
 Thy miseries can never lay thee lower.
 Look up, thou poor afflicted one! thou mourner
 Whom none has comforted! where are thy friends,

H

The

The dear companions of thy joyful days,
 Whose hearts thy war m prosperity made glad,
 Whose arms were taught to grow like Ivy round thee,
 And bind thee to their bosoms—Thus with thee,
 Thus let us live, and let us die, they said,
 For sure thou art the sister of our loves,
 And nothing shall divide us—Now where are they ?

J. Sb. Ah ! *Bellmour*, where indeed ! they stand aloof,
 And view my desolation from afar ;
 When they pass by, they shake their heads in scorn,
 And cry, behold the harlot and her end !
 And yet thy goodness turns aside to pity me.
 Alas ! there may be danger, get thee gone !
 Let me not pull a ruin on thy head,
 Leave me to die alone, for I am fall'n
 Never to rise, and all relief is vain.

Bell. Yet raise thy drooping head ; for I am come
 To chase away despair. Behold ! where yonder
 That honest man, that faithful brave *Dumont*,
 Is hastening to thy aid——

J. Sb. *Dumont* ! ha ! where !

[*Raising herself, and looking about.*]

Then heav'n has heard my prayer, his very name
 Renews the springs of life, and cheers my soul.
 Has he then escap'd the snare ?

Bell. He has, but see——

He comes unlike to that *Dumont* you knew,
 For now he wears your better angel's form
 And comes to visit you with peace and pardon.

Enter SHORE.

J. Sb. Speak, tell me ! which is he ? and oh ! what
 would

This dreadful vision ! see it comes upon me——

It is my husband—ah !

[*She swoons.*]

Sb. She faints ! support her !

Sustain her head, while I infuse this cordial
 Into her dying lips——from spicy drugs,
 Rich herbs and flow'rs, the potent juice is drawn ;

With

With wondrous force it strikes the lazy spirits,
Drives 'em around, and wakens life anew.

Bell. Her weakness could not bear the strong surprize.
But see, she stirs! and the returning blood
Faintly begins to blush again, and kindle
Upon her ashy cheek——

Sb. So—gently raise her—— [*Raising her up.*]

J. Sb. Ha! what art thou! *Bellmour!*

Bel. How fare you, Lady?

J. Sb. My heart is thrill'd with horror—

Bell. Be of courage—

Your husband lives! 'tis he, my worthiest friend——

J. Sb. Still art thou there!——still dost thou hover
round me!

Oh save me, *Bellmour*, from his angry shade!

Bell. 'Tis he himself!——he lives!——look up——

J. Sb. I dare not!

Oh that my eyes could shut him out for ever——

Sb. Am I so hateful then, so deadly to thee,
To blast thy eyes with horror! since I'm grown
A burthen to the world, myself and thee,
Wou'd I had ne'er surviv'd to see thee more.

J. Sb. Oh thou most injur'd——dost thou live indeed?
Fall then ye mountains on my guilty head,
Hide me, ye rocks, within your sacred caverns;
Cast thy black veil upon my shame, O night!
And shield me with thy fable wing for ever.

Sb. Why dost thou turn away?—why tremble thus?
Why thus indulge thy fears? and in despair,
Abandon thy distracted soul to horror?
Cast every black and guilty thought behind thee,
And let 'em never vex thy quiet more.
My arms, my heart are open to receive thee,
To bring thee back to thy forsaken home,
With tender joy, with fond forgiving love,
And all the longings of my first desires.

J. Sb. No, arm thy brow with vengeance; and ap-
pear

The minister of heav'n's enquiring justice.

Array thyself all-terrible for judgment,
 Wrath in thy eyes, and thunder in thy voice ;
 Pronounce my sentence, and if yet there be
 A woe I have not felt, inflict it on me.

Sb. The measure of thy sorrows is compleat ;
 And I am come to snatch thee from injustice.
 The hand of pow'r no more shall crush thy weakness,
 Nor proud oppression grind thy humble soul.

J. Sb. Art thou not risen by miracle from death ?
 Thy shroud is fall'n from off thee, and the grave
 Was bid to give thee up, that thou might'st come
 The messenger of grace and goodness to me,
 To seal my peace, and bless me ere I go.
 Oh let me then fall down beneath thy feet,
 And weep my gratitude for ever there :
 Give me your drops, ye soft descending rains.
 Give me your streams, ye never-ceasing springs,
 That my sad eyes may still supply my duty,
 And feed an everlasting flood of sorrow.

Sb. Waste not thy feeble spirits—I have long
 Beheld, unknown, thy mourning and repentance ;
 Therefore my heart has set aside the past,
 And holds thee white as unoffending innocence :
 Therefore, in spite of cruel *Gloster's* rage,
 Soon as my friend had broke my prison-doors,
 I flew to thy assistance. Let us haste
 Now while occasion seems to smile upon us,
 Forsake this place of shame and find a shelter.

J. Sb. What shall I say to you ? but I obey——

Sb. Lean on my arm——

J. Sb. Alas ! I am wondrous faint :
 But that's not strange, I have not eat these three days.

Sb. Oh merciless ! look here, my Love, I've brought
 thee

Some rich conserves——

J. Sb. How can you be so good ?
 But you were ever thus ; I well remember
 With what fond care, what diligence of love,
 You lavish'd out your wealth to buy me pleasures,
 Preventing

Preventing every wish : have you forgot
The costly string of pearl you brought me home,
And ty'd about my neck ?—how cou'd I leave you?

Sb. Taste some of this, or this——

J. Sb. You're strangely alter'd——

Say, gentle *Bellmour*, is he not ? how pale
Your visage is become ! your eyes are hollow ;
Nay, you are wrinkled too——alas the day !
My wretchedness has cost you many a tear,
And many a bitter pang since last we parted.

Sb. No more of that—thou talk'st, but do'st not eat.

J. Sb. My feeble jaws forget their common office,
My tasteless tongue cleaves to the clammy roof,
And now a gen'ral loathing grows upon me——
Oh, I am sick at heart !

Sb. Thou murd'rous sorrow !
Wo't thou still drink her blood, pursue her still !
Must she then die ! Oh ! my poor penitent,
Speak peace to thy sad heart. She hears me not ;
Grief masters ev'ry sense—help me to hold her—

Enter CATESBY with a guard.

Cat. Seize on 'em both, as traitors to the state——

Bill. What means this violence !

[Guards lay hold of Shore and Bellmour.]

Cat. Have we not found you,
In scorn of the Protector's strict command,
Assisting this base woman, and abetting
Her infamy ?

Sb. Infamy on thy head !
Thou tool of power, thou pander to authority !
I tell thee, knave, thou know'st of none so virtuous.
And she that bore thee was an *Æthiop* to her.

Cat. You'll answer this at full—away with 'em.

Sb. Is charity grown treason to your court ?
What honest man would live beneath such rules ?
I am content that we should die together——

Cat. Convey the men to prison ; but for her,
Leave her to hunt her fortune as she may.

J. Sb.

J. Sb. I will not part with him—for me!—for me!
Oh! must he die for me?

[*Following him as he is carry'd off—she falls.*

Sb. Inhuman villains! [Breaks from the guard.
Stand off! the agonies of death are on her—
She pulls, she grips me hard with her cold hand.

J. Sb. Was this blow wanting to compleat my ruin!
Oh let him go, ye ministers of terror;
He shall offend no more, for I will die,
And yield obedience to your cruel master.
Tarry a little, but a little longer,
And take my last breath with you.

Sb. Oh my Love!
Why have I liv'd to see this bitter moment,
This grief by far surpassing all my former!
Why dost thou fix thy dying eyes upon me,
With such an earnest, such a piteous look,
As if thy heart were full of some sad meaning.
Thou could'st not speak!—

J. Sb. Forgive me——but forgive me!

Sb. Be witness for me, ye celestial host,
Such mercy and such pardon as my soul
Accords to thee, and begs of heav'n to shew thee;
May such befall me at my latest hour,
And make my portion blest or curs'd for ever.

J. Sb. Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace—
'Tis very dark, and I have lost you now—
Was there not something I would have bequeath'd you?
But I have nothing left me to bestow,
Nothing but one sad sigh. Oh mercy, heav'n! [*Dies.*

Bell. There fled the soul,
And left the load of misery behind.

Sb. Oh my heart's treasure! is this pale sad visage
All that remains of thee? are these dead eyes
The light that cheer my soul? oh heavy hour!
But I will fix my trembling lips to thine,
'Till I am cold and senseless quite, as thou art.
What, must we part then?—will you——

[*To the guards taking him away.*

Fare

Fare thee well——

[*Kissing her.*

Now execute your tyrant's will, and lead me
To bonds or death, 'tis equally indifferent.

Bell. Let those who view this sad example, know,
What fate attends the broken marriage-vow;
And teach their children in succeeding times,
No common vengeance waits upon these crimes;
When such severe repentance could not save
From want, from shame, and an untimely grave.

[*Exeunt.*

EPI-

EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

THE modest Matrons all, ye virtuous Wives,
 Who lead with horrid Husbands, decent Lives;
 You, who for all you are in such a Taking;
 To see your Spouses drinking, gaming, raking;
 Yet make a Conscience still of Cuckold-making;
 What can we say your Pardon to obtain?
 This Matter here was prov'd against poor Jane Shore;
 She never once deny'd it, but in short,
 Whimper'd — and cry'd — Sweet Sir, I am sorry for't.
 'Twas well he met a kind, good-natur'd Soul,
 We are not all so easy to controul:
 I fancy one might find in this good Town
 Some wou'd ha' told the Gentleman his own;
 Have answer'd smart, — 'To what do you pretend,
 ' Blockhead! — As if I must n't see a Friend:
 ' Tell me of Hackney-Coaches — Faunts to th' City —
 ' Where shou'd I buy my China — Faith, I'll fit ye —
 Our Wife was of a milder, meeker Spirit;
 You! — Lords and Masters! — was not that same Merit?
 Don't you allow it to be virtuous bearing,
 When we submit thus to your Domineering?
 Well, Peace be with her, she did Wrong most surely;
 But so do many more who look demurely.
 Nor shou'd our mourning Madam weep alone,
 There are more Ways of Wickedness than one.
 If the reforming Stage should fall to shaming,
 Ill-Nature, Pride, Hypocrisy, and Gaming;
 The Poets frequently might move Compassion,
 And with She-Tragedies o'er-run the Nation.
 Then judge the fair Offender with good-Nature,
 And let your fellow-Feeling curb your Satyre.
 What if our Neighbours have some little Failing,
 Must we need fall to Damning and to Railing?
 For her Excuse too, be it understood,
 That if the Woman was not quite so good,
 Her Lover was a King, she Flesh and Blood.
 And since sh' has dearly paid the sinful Score,
 Be kind at last, and pity poor Jane Shore.

F I N I S.

